

WASHINGTON – U.S. Rep. Harry E. Mitchell joined a bipartisan group of lawmakers who voted against a plan to hand out \$658 billion in farm subsidies over the next 10 years today, arguing that continuing giveaways to wealthy farmers reflect the wrong economic priorities. Despite Mitchell's "no" vote, the measure passed 318 to 106.

The conference report on H.R. 2419, known as the Farm Bill, continues to provide \$5.2 billion each year in direct payments – 60 percent of which go to the wealthiest 10 percent of recipients.

"This Farm Bill isn't about protecting mom and pop farmers," said Mitchell. "The vast majority of these resources go to those who need it least. We ought to encourage competition in the agricultural industry, and the Farm Bill doesn't advance that priority."

Mitchell supported the Fairness in Farm and Food Policy Amendment to the Farm Bill, which was offered by U.S. Reps. Jeff Flake of Arizona and Ron Kind of Wisconsin. The Kind-Flake Amendment would have made significant cuts to the subsidies and invested in conservation efforts, nutrition programs and deficit reduction.

The Wall Street Journal today opined against the legislation, noting that, "This year farm income is expected to reach an all-time high of \$92.3 billion, an increase of 56 percent in two years, making growers perhaps the most undeserving welfare recipients in American history.... There are new programs for Kentucky horse breeders and Pacific Coast salmon fishermen, and your tax dollars will help finance the dairy industry's 'Got Milk?' campaign." [Source:

Wall Street Journal
, May 14, 2008]

Many organizations, including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Americans for Tax Reform, Citizens Against Government Waste, Taxpayers for Common Sense, Defenders of Wildlife and the National Wildlife Federation joined Mitchell in opposition to the conference report.